United Nations A/AC.159/SR.455

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 August 2013

Original: English

Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean

Summary record of the 455th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 11 July 2013, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Kohona ..... (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chair** declared open the 2013 session of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Election of officers

2. **The Chair** said that although the former Vice Chairs of the Committee, representing Australia, Indonesia and Mozambique, had returned to their capitals, he had been informed that the delegations of those countries wished to put forward Ms. Street (Australia), Mr. Aprianto (Indonesia) and Mr. Serage (Mozambique) to replace them. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to dispense with the nomination of candidates and to elect them by acclamation.

3. *Ms. Street (Australia), Mr. Aprianto (Indonesia) and Mr. Serage (Mozambique) were elected Vice-Chairs by acclamation.*

4. **The Chair** said that the former Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee had also returned to his capital but that the delegation of that country, Madagascar, wished to put forward Ms. Rajaonarivelo (Madagascar) to replace him. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to dispense with the nomination of candidates and to elect her by acclamation.

5. *Ms. Rajaonarivelo (Madagascar) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

Adoption of the agenda (A/AC.159/L.143)

6. *The agenda was adopted.*

Report of the Chair of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 66/22

7. **The Chair** said that the situation in the Indian Ocean region had changed significantly since the adoption of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace in 1971; the cold war superpower rivalry had ceased, socioeconomic development had flourished and initiatives such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) had fostered many economic and security partnerships. However, new threats, such as terrorism and piracy, were endangering the same interests that the Declaration aspired to protect while geographical proximity and shared challenges were giving rise to economic, political and social commonalities. Thus, the original mandate of the Committee remained relevant to regional peace, security and economic growth.

8. Collaboration in energy production was a tantalizing prospect as many energy producers were located in the region. The Committee could foster new energy consumption partnerships that could also yield security benefits. The likely increase in demand in India, China and elsewhere was a great opportunity for energy producers.

9. Cooperation could also address environmental challenges. Climate change was likely to affect the lives and security of Asia's 4 billion inhabitants, 40 per cent of whom lived within 100 km of the coast. Coastal marine systems and freshwater resources should be managed in response to broader environmental issues. Sea temperatures in the Indian Ocean were rising faster than anywhere else: severe weather and rising sea levels threatened the existence of communities in low-lying areas such as the Maldives and by 2050, 40 per cent of Bangladesh's land area would be affected. In addition, the warming of the ocean would affect fish habitats, and thus the livelihoods of many fishermen, and environmental refugees fleeing natural disasters were an emerging problem.

10. Regional cooperation in combating piracy was also needed. Although a coalition of navies was seeking to protect the Gulf of Aden, pirates had staged 439 attacks and held 802 crew members hostage worldwide in 2011 alone. They forced vessels to travel around the Cape of Good Hope rather than through the Suez Canal, incurring security and insurance costs, although most pirate attacks in the Indian Ocean occurred while ships were at anchor. Improved intelligence-gathering and -sharing and the assistance of private security agencies had reduced the number of pirate attacks to 297 in 2012, a five year low. In the long term, however, only a comprehensive, multi layered approach involving political, military and social measures could resolve the problem; it should be borne in mind that piracy had its roots on land and in economic conditions.

11. The Committee was well placed to address all aspects of the region's many security issues. Its scope and focus should therefore be further defined in order

to ensure the relevance and sustainability of its solutions. With time and adequate resources, it could serve as a vital regional political, economic and social forum.

12. **Ms. Street** (Australia) said that Australia would begin a two-year term as Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation in November 2013. Because the region was an artery of global commerce, developments there could resonate widely. Although the Association had, to date, had a modest role in improving security and fostering balanced growth and sustainable development, her Government would ensure that it played a greater part in maritime security and safety, oceanic research, climate change, disaster risk mitigation, marine conservation and food security.

13. The Committee, too, could do more to achieve its objectives. Since its establishment, new challenges had emerged and older concerns had reappeared in new guises. The time had come for its members to consider new ways forward with a view to furthering cooperation and dialogue with all stakeholders of the region.

Adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session
(A/AC.159/L.144)

14. **Ms. Rajaonarivelo** (Madagascar), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixty eighth session (A/AC.159/L.144), explained that paragraphs 3 and 7 would be completed to reflect the statements made at the current meeting.

15. *The draft report was adopted.*

Closure of the session

16. The Chair declared closed the 2013 session of the Ad Hoc Committee.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.